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# THE MEXICAN PEOPLE

*By* JOHN LIND

While Mexico has less than one-quarter of the area of our country, the diversity of soil, temperature, rainfall and consequent flora is much greater than with us. In the north, along the boundary, the climatic conditions are very similar on both sides of the line—generally arid. The northern half of Mexico, excepting the narrow coastal plains along the Gulf of Mexico on the east and the Gulf of California on the west, is a repetition of the physical characteristics that we are familiar with in western Texas, in New Mexico and in Arizona.

Further south, as the rainfall increases under the influence of the tropics, there is a vast region comprising the fertile valleys of Guadalajara and Mexico which, though partly in the tropics, on account of its great altitude enjoys a most delightful temperate climate. This region contains the great historic cities of Mexico. Its people had reached the highest point of civilization attained by the Indian race on this continent before contact with the Europeans.

South of Mexico City there is a rapid fall of altitude toward the Isthmus. Along the Gulf of Mexico the coastal plain, in the latitude of Mexico City, attains a width of forty to sixty miles and it widens toward the south so that it embraces virtually the entire area of the great states of Vera Cruz, Campeche and Yucatan.

This region, as far north as Tampico, is wholly tropical. Frosts are unknown. The rainfall varies from one hundred to two hundred inches, and more in some localities. The soil and flora are probably as rich and varied as can be found in any similar area in the world. Palms and the precious dyewoods grow in profusion. This is the home of the canna, the dahlia and the unlimited variety of plants and shrubs that grace our parks and gardens. Along the streams the trees are almost smothered with orchids of charming coloring and fascinating shapes.

While the central plateau, to which I have already referred, produces cotton, wheat, corn, beans, barley and the fruits of the temperate zone, this coastal plain produces rice, cane, henequen, cocoa, the banana and virtually all the fruits and products known to the tropics. The declivities connecting these zones are covered with beautiful forests rich in areas of industrial woods, interspersed with plantations of coffee and various semitropical fruits.

Many hypotheses have been advanced relative to the origin and derivation of the American Indians. If I were to venture a guess I should say that the probabilities favor the view that the original home of the race was in the region of Yucatan and the Isthmus. Human remains and the remains of human industry are found, all through this region, which antedate many marked geological changes and evidence great antiquity and a very dense population in the remote past. That the different branches of the race had a common origin and probably a common home from which they migrated seems proved by the wonderful uniformity of type and physical characteristics which dominate the race from Yucatan to Hudson Bay. The difference in appearance

in Indians from these remote regions is very much less than is the difference between the Europeans living on the shores of the Baltic and those dwelling on the Mediterranean.

I believe it rational to assume that during the glacial period, when this portion of the continent was a region of ice and snow, not unlike Greenland at the present time, Yucatan and the Isthmus enjoyed a genial climate and a very dense population. Density of population develops civilization. As the ice receded and the climate to the north moderated, the teeming population began to spread. Our portion of the continent was peopled. The elements of time, distance and environment easily account for the difference in language and in customs.

Civilization as well as population moved north. When Cortez entered Mexico in 1519, the City of Mexico and not Yucatan was the high seat of the red man's civilization on this continent. I use the term civilization advisedly. The Indian empire of Montezuma, which the Spaniards destroyed four hundred years ago, was in many respects as far advanced as some of the European states of that period.

While the Indians who were encountered by the settlers of the United States lived under the loose sway of chiefs and councils of old men, the settled nations of Mexico had attained a highly organized government. For a long period prior to the Conquest there had been a federation of three states, of which Mexico was the principal. In its internal affairs each state was independent, but in war, or other public interests that affected all, they acted jointly. The spoils of conquest were divided in the ratio of two-fifths to each of the larger states and one-fifth to the smaller. The kings were

elected within the royal families. They lived in palaces which, at least in size, approximated the palaces in Europe at that date.

Below the king was a numerous and powerful class of nobles, who led the king's forces in war and acted as his counselors and assistant administrators in time of peace. There was also a rich and powerful merchant class. Great estates were owned by the crown. Much of the land had been granted to nobles and military chieftains and, by way of endowment, to maintain the temples and the priesthood. A large portion of the land, however, especially in the parts more distant from the larger cities, was owned and occupied by village communities known as pueblos under the Spanish rule, many of which still survive.

In these villages each freeman occupied and tilled his portion in severalty during life. But the title reverted to the community at his death unless there were members of his family to continue the occupancy. The members of these communities were freemen. Slavery existed, but in a rather mild form. The children of slaves were born free.

The judiciary system which obtained in the Aztec state demonstrates more than anything else the high degree of development which the nation had attained. There was a supreme court for the cognizance of law appeals, located in the palace in the City of Mexico. There were inferior tribunals in the principal cities, over each of which a supreme judge presided. These judges held office for life and could not be removed even by the king. Their decisions in criminal cases were final. Lands were set apart for the maintenance of these judicial officers. They appointed and supervised the actions of the

subordinate magistrates and revised their judgments. In fact, nothing gives a higher idea of the elaborate civilization of Mexico than this judicial system, which culminated in a general court presided over by the king.

The laws and records of the court were set down and kept in the picture-writings which were in use. Some of these records are still preserved in the National Museum. Judicial oaths were administered with a solemnity surpassing anything prevailing in our courts. The affiant or witness solemnly placed his hand on the ground and then put his forefinger to his lip, affirming by Mother Earth. The criminal code was very severe. Fraud, the removal of landmarks, and adultery, were punished by having the offender's head crushed between stones or by cutting out the heart.

War was the great occupation of the nobility, the same as it has been in Europe to this day. The children of nobles were trained in the science and theory of war and in military exploits from their earliest infancy. The religious instincts of the people had been developed in a high degree. There was a thoroughly worked-out dogma, and rituals of great detail and complexity covered the principal events of life. The temples were called "God's Houses." The rites were of the same character as are found elsewhere—prayer, sacrifice, processions, dances, fastings and other austerities. But the feature which made the whole system repulsive and which probably has left an impress on the Mexican people to this day was the horrible practice of human sacrifice. The extent to which this prevailed, as reported by the chroniclers and the Aztec records, surpasses belief.

The priests had developed the art of picture-writing to a very high degree and had almost reached the point

of alphabetic writing. Systematic records of historical events, religious festivals and other incidents of note had been kept for centuries, not only in the Mexican state, but during the earlier civilization which existed in Yucatan. Agriculture had been developed in a considerable degree. In fact, the Mexican people live today on the same staple foods which fed their ancestors centuries before the advent of the Europeans. Corn and beans were the staples. A variety of vegetables were known and cultivated. Chocolate was a favorite drink. The tools of agriculture were few and rude. A small bronze hoe was the only metallic implement employed. Tobacco was cultivated and used for smoking. Intoxicants were prepared from the maguey plant, and legend has it that it was the discovery and abuse of intoxicating drinks that destroyed the Toltic population which developed the first civilization in Mexico and constructed the prehistoric monuments which still remain intact.

In art, metal-work and all kinds of handicraft the nation had made great progress. Cotton was extensively cultivated. The fibers of the sisal plant and the palm were utilized. Beautiful cloths were woven. Garments of fine texture and highly embroidered in brilliant colors were manufactured. Ornaments of gold, silver and the semiprecious stones were produced in profusion. Iron was not known, but copper and tin were mined and bronze was made very similar to that produced in the Old World. Gold and silver were used as money for trading purposes, copper and cocoa beans for small change. In fine, the Indian nations of southern Mexico had reached a comparatively high point of civilization along all lines of human endeavor.

When Cortez reached Mexico he found a city cover-

ing some eleven square miles of ground, with vast palaces, temples, zoölogical and botanical gardens containing most complete collections of the flora and fauna of the country. The principles of engineering were well understood. The drains, aqueducts and the highways of the city, as well as the military defenses, had been skillfully laid out and constructed. The population generally was vigorous, of good physical stature and not at all lacking in courage. But, notwithstanding this, they proved an easy prey to the Spanish adventurers, clad in steel and fighting with swords and firearms. But the Conquest was accomplished by subterfuge and treachery as well as by force. Is it not possible that the racial recollection of the terrible days of the Conquest in part accounts for the unreasoning hostility of the Mexican peon against the Spaniards and all that is Spanish?

The Aztec Empire extended as far north as Zacatecas. In a general way it may be said that the country to the south of a line extending from Tampico on the Gulf to Mazatlan on the Pacific was occupied by settled city-building Indians, of whose civilization I have given a hurried sketch. To the north of this line, speaking generally, the Indians were of the unsettled, roving character, similar in most respects to the prairie and western tribes of our country.

The settled Indians were subjugated and reduced to a condition of the most abject servitude by the Spaniards in the course of a few generations. The northern country was not occupied by the Spaniards at the time of the Conquest. Commencing about a century later, the Mexican viceroys sent expeditions to the north and occupied strategic positions from time to time as far north as New Mexico. The Indians were largely exterminated

or driven further north into the territory now part of the United States. Settlements were made principally by Mexican mixed bloods from the South, and by adventurers and fugitives from justice and from political persecution. In fact, northern Mexico was settled by killing and driving out the Indians who originally roved over the country, much in the same manner as our West was settled. This is an important fact to be borne in mind in any study of the Mexican people.

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When I reached Mexico on my recent trip, I found that the section of country which I have referred to as northern Mexico was virtually all in a state of revolt against the authority which Huerta assumed to exercise in the South. [Upon investigation I became thoroughly convinced that the so-called revolution was only in a slight degree political in its character. [That individual disappointments and ambitions played a part is not to be gainsaid; but the impelling force that actuated the mass of the people who participated in the constitutionalist movement was economic and social rather than political in the partisan sense.] The same unrest that resulted in the general armed movement in the North was operative in the South, but in a much more subdued form. The Zapata movement in the Southwest was the most tangible manifestation in the South.

It was urged by the Europeans generally, and by a large element in this country, that the recognition of Huerta by our government so that he might borrow money to enable him to carry on his war of subduing the North more effectively was the only solution. Nearly all the Americans in southern Mexico were of that opin-

ion. I met and interviewed most of them. They were very hostile in their comments upon the President for not pursuing that course.

As they called on me, I usually asked them whether, in their judgment, any peace that Huerta might be able to bring about would be lasting. The answer was invariably, "No." And many would add that no peace in Mexico could or would be lasting so long as Mexico continued to be "Mexican."

I felt then, as I feel now, that permanent peace in Mexico on the basis of the social and economic conditions that have existed in the past is an impossibility. I will say further, that I am now satisfied that even if Huerta had been recognized and afforded the opportunity to borrow all the money that Europe would lend, he could not have established peace in Mexico. He certainly had an abundance of money as compared to the means at the disposal of the constitutionalists. He obtained in various ways and used upward of two hundred million pesos during his brief career. But, notwithstanding, he was unable to make any substantial headway against the constitutionalists, though they were carrying on their operations comparatively without funds.

Southern Mexico is economically and socially living under conditions similar to those which prevailed in Europe in the sixteenth century. The same is true in a degree with respect to northern Mexico. But the people of that section have been more assertive and have secured substantial improvements in their economic and social condition.

The people of Mexico are essentially agricultural, but they have been deprived of the land. Probably less than five per cent of the families in Mexico own their homes.

One of the first acts of the Spanish conqueror was to distribute the arable lands of the people among his lieutenants, and for church establishments. Some small communities in the remote sections, or such as occupied less desirable land, were left undisturbed. But as a whole the nation was made homeless, and has so continued to this day. This is, and will be, the cause of revolutions in Mexico until the question is settled.

The natives occupying the land were awarded with it to the conquerors as serfs. Later they were nominally freed, but they had no means of subsistence and no places for abode except the miserable huts grouped outside the walled inclosures of the buildings on the great estates. In wages they are paid twenty-five centavos per day and given a small measure (about a pint) of corn. They are permitted to keep a few chickens and occasionally a goat or two, but if they show the least inclination to increase their possessions their ambition is promptly curbed.

The law of Mexico makes it a crime for a person in the employ of another to leave service while in debt to the employer. Consequently the great landowners take good care that all their peons are in their debt. The religious instinct of the poor peon is made use of for this purpose. The minimum fee of the church for marriage, baptism and ceremonies of like character, is ten pesos. No peon could accumulate or have so much wealth at one time. If he is ambitious to wed his wife in church, or to have his first-born baptized, the fee, with the expense of the *fiesta*, makes him a debtor for life. The debts of the peons are regarded as real property and are inventoried with it and added to the purchase price in case of sale of the estate. I will mention, as illustrative of the conditions, that the fertile state of

Morelos, in which the Zapata movement has been rampant for years, is owned by twenty-seven men.

What is true in respect to agricultural labor is in a measure true of other labor, except where labor conditions and wages in the United States have affected conditions in Mexico.

With the development of southwestern Texas, the mining industry along the border, and the extension of continuous lines of railway from this city to the Isthmus, a new world has been thrust upon the horizon of the Mexican of the North. Instead of twenty-five centavos he is able to earn three to four pesos a day in the Texas cotton-fields, on the American railways and in the mines. He is able to get married in church, to have his children baptized, to live in a decent house and to educate his children; and he does all these things.

He has learned to read his own language, and in most instances has picked up a little English. The better circumstanced of the northern Mexicans invariably learn English and educate their children in the United States. It is these facts that make them rebels against the conditions of the South and of the old Mexico. The new leaven is at work, and no Diaz, nor a thousand Huertas, with all the money in the world, could restore the peace of the old régime unless enough foreign soldiers were brought in to put the adult Mexican population underground.

The way the Mexican peon has responded to these new conditions is not only a hopeful sign for the future, but it is a marvelous demonstration of the potential power of the race. A few years ago the National Railways of Mexico—some twelve thousand miles—were wholly operated by Americans. Today that entire system, from

division superintendents to trackmen, is in the hands of peons who a generation ago had not heard steam puff. They do the engineering, superintend and manage the shops, construct cars, coaches and locomotives that would do credit to any shop on this side of the line.

Of course all of the men doing this great work are not of the peon class. Many are of the property-owning, cultured class. In their case, however, the change is equally miraculous. A generation ago men of that class would have lost caste if they had turned their hands to a gainful occupation.

When I saw and reflected over these things I asked myself, and I asked some of the critics of President Wilson's policy, whether it was not within the range of probability that a people who within a brief generation had responded with such facility to the new social and economic environment, might make equivalent progress in the field of politics and government, if afforded a fair chance. I am hopeful, yes confident, that they will. I do not look for uninterrupted success. We have been administering our own affairs and practicing self-government for nearly three hundred years and still we have problems, old as well as new, that have not yet been adequately solved.

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I have thus far spoken of the Mexican people in very general terms. I will go a little more into detail. Broadly speaking, it may be said that fifteen to twenty per cent of the Mexican population is of comparatively pure Spanish descent. Some forty per cent is creole or mixed blood, and the remaining forty per cent Indian. The Negro element is negligible. There is no clearly defined color line and absolutely no color prejudice. With

regard to type, physical appearance and mental characteristics, I venture to say that the great body of the Mexican people, omitting a few Indian tribes in the West, are more homogeneous than our population. This is the more remarkable as it is confessedly in a people of mixed bloods that a fixed type is rarely found. Whether this is owing to the fact that the original mixture proceeded almost wholly from fathers of Spanish blood and Indian mothers I will not assume to say; but the fact is as I have stated, and I regard it a most promising factor for the future peaceful development and prosperity of the nation.

What I have said and am about to say does not apply wholly to the old, exclusive, land-owning aristocracy in and about Mexico City. While that element has much in common with the body of the people, I think I discovered some traits peculiar to it. One is a limitless pride that we should call conceit in an American. I believe it the result of centuries of contact with what they regard as an inferior race. Constant comparisons in their own favor would tend, it seems to me, to develop just such a characteristic. The same trait in the peon takes the form of an extreme sensitiveness, both of which make intercourse delicate for the stranger from the North.

Any study of the Mexican political situation with reference to the future policy which we should pursue is inadequate if it does not take into consideration the general characteristics and the historical factors that have shaped the ethical standards of the Mexican people as a race.

The impression one gets from the foreigners in Mexico, and the same notion seems to be current in the American press, is that the Mexicans, and Latin Ameri-

cans generally, are so different from us racially and psychologically that we have no common ethical standards. I own freely that this was also my impression upon first contact with the Mexican mind. In a way, I still concede it to be true; but I have become firmly convinced that the differences, great as they are, are not racial nor psychological, and are such as can be overcome under conditions of social and industrial enlightenment.

I met a great many Mexicans. I met and discussed these questions with more than a thousand foreigners. I made one observation that amused me much. Many of the foreigners of long residence in Mexico, and the very ones who complained of some of the characteristics of the Mexicans, had themselves, unconsciously of course, adopted numerous Mexican traits and viewpoints. This is natural. A normal man adjusts himself to his environment, physical and mental. If he fails in this he falls by the wayside. The ethical standards of a people, as practiced in everyday life, are not likely to be higher than is required for the maintenance of society and the protection of the individual in the circumstances under which the people live. In other words, I regard moral standards the safeguards which society consciously or unconsciously erects for its own protection. If I am right in these assumptions, then it behooves us to be more charitable than foreigners generally are in discussing Mexican character.

The charge is often flippantly made by foreigners, and by the Mexicans themselves of the aristocratic class, that the masses of the Mexican people, particularly those of the North, are not to be trusted; that they are ungrateful and turbulent; that they distrust one another, lack patriotism and respect nothing but force. In so far

as these charges are true it is easy to locate the historical cause of the shortcomings. A glance at the different objects which actuated the settlement of the United States and of Mexico, and the subsequent history of the two nations, affords the explanation of many of the differences between the two peoples.

The early settlers of the United States came from a country in which the art of government had been seriously studied; where personal liberty was enjoyed under the law. The emigrants came with the avowed intention of gaining greater liberty and establishing freer institutions. The Spaniards, on the other hand, came as conquerors and adventurers, to gather wealth and to extend the authority and fanaticism of Spain. Each succeeded tolerably well in accomplishing the objects of the migration; the Spanish so well that the bondage of Spain, spiritually and politically, was imposed upon Mexico and her people for three hundred years.

That bondage was so complete that it is a marvel that enough spirit and initiative could have been developed under it to enable the people of Mexico finally to throw off the Spanish yoke. The English colonial policy was harsh and selfish in the centuries preceding the American Revolution, but it was mild and benign compared to the policy of Spain. The latter was one of absolute dominion of every activity in the colonies. Immigration from other countries than Spain was prohibited. Intercourse with other peoples was forbidden under the most severe penalties. The viceroy appointed by the king usually received the office either to restore the fortune of some noble family or in compensation for nefarious service for his master that called for big pay.

The viceroy's power was absolute. There was not

even the force of public opinion to control or soften it—no right of petition or remonstrance was tolerated. Both were treason in the eyes of the viceroy, and were summarily punished in the most cruel manner. His will was law. His whims or his interest dictated the decisions of the judges. Mexico to this day has never had a court since the Conquest that administered the law according to the right of the case, or without regard to the person or “the fear or favor of any man.” The only exception was in the case of some of the cities which enjoyed royal charters and exercised certain functions of local self-government. Every participation in government was denied the Mexican people; none but native-born citizens of Spain were eligible to hold office or discharge any public functions.

The enjoyment of life, liberty or property was wholly a matter of favor or privilege, never one of right. The very word “right” in the political sense is unknown in the Spanish language. In its stead is used the term “guarantee,” which implies a negotiated privilege or concession. The equality of right between individuals, or equality before the law, has never gained a foothold in Mexico in the real sense in which we understand the terms.

During the Spanish régime the Mexicans knew no other political relations than absolute authority and dominion on one side, and submission without question or protest on the other. The informer and the executioner, the two effective instrumentalities of tyranny, were supplemented by the horrors of the inquisition for a period of more than two hundred years. As a result, deceit, subterfuge and bribery were the only resources available to the individual for the protection of his life, his liberty and his property.

A high moral standard in respect to frankness and directness of speech cannot be looked for in such circumstances; nor can you expect a people wholly to overcome in a few decades vices which centuries of misrule have fixed upon them; but if allowance is made for the concessions which truth must always make to politeness, according to the Mexican ideal of politeness, then I think it may fairly be said that the word of the Mexican may be taken with as much reliance as the word of men of other nationalities.

In this connection it is a pleasure to speak of a trait which is sometimes discussed in connection with the one commented on. I refer to the universal courtesy and kindness which you observe and feel on every hand in the daily life of the people of Mexico. It is in such marked contrast with what we Americans are accustomed to that one is almost tempted to question its sincerity. Many foreigners do. They refer to it as a cloak for deceit—a species of lying. That, in my judgment, is an unwarranted aspersion and does the Mexican character grievous injustice. I feel that it is a positive virtue and one that the Mexican people possess and practice in a degree unknown to us. Among a people where affability is not the rule it may be necessary to be on your guard against the man who “bows too low,” but not so in Mexico; not on that score.

I speak on this subject from personal experience gained under circumstances well calculated to test the genuineness of Mexican courtesy. My mission, at least in the City of Mexico, was not regarded by the press or by the leaders of public opinion as a friendly one. Nevertheless, I cannot recall an instance among the thousands of people that I met and came in contact with, or

in my walks about the cities, or on the country roads, where the slightest mark of rudeness or disrespect was shown. This trait is just as pronounced in the case of the Indian as it is in the creole, hence I see no basis for the contention that it is a matter of blood. The Indian on our side of the border is not noted for politeness; in fact, so far as I have observed, the reverse is true.

It may be noted also that this prevailing spirit of politeness has, in a measure at least, made an impression on the Americans and other foreigners long resident in Mexico. So it is fairly safe to assume that the Anglo-Saxon blood is not immune against its influence. Instead of charging Mexican politeness to Latin blood, I think it more rational to say that the political and social atmosphere which dominated Mexico forced it upon the people to start with. Class distinction always compels at least outward politeness.

The charge of ingratitude is easily made, and usually against persons who least deserve it. Few Mexicans of the peon class have had much to be grateful for. I venture to say that not many of them have been the recipients of unselfish kindness. A being who has never known kindness cannot be expected to respond to the first experience. My own observations lead to a different conclusion. The weekly offerings of flowers brought by the hands of silent peons to the grave of the martyred Madero convinced me that gratitude is not wanting in the Mexican heart. The hard experience of the Mexican has made him wary and suspicious. It has been difficult for the Mexican people to believe that our President did not have some ulterior motive in his proffered assistance and good offices. I think, however, that they are now nearly convinced; and when once convinced I think it will

be true of the Mexican people, as it is of individual Mexicans, that when once you have their real confidence, more loyal friends are not to be found.

The charge of turbulence could well be made against the old army organization. No country was ever cursed with an institution more vicious in its influence on the national life, or more disturbing to the peace of the people or their well-being. But it has disappeared. The revolution has destroyed it, and nothing so wholly bad can ever succeed it. All revolutions prior to the Madero movement had been started and carried on by factions of the federal army. The mass of the Mexican people are as peaceable and peace-loving as any people in the world. Fights and brawls are very rare in Mexico.

The accusation that the Mexicans are prone to distrust one another, and that they are lacking in the spirit of coöperation comes nearer having a foundation in fact than any of the other charges. This weakness, in so far as it exists, is the direct result of the historical conditions already referred to. When any man with whom you dealt was a possible informer, either for his own gain or out of malice, there was little room for trust, and no safety in coöperation. It is also true that the Mexican people, until very recently, have had absolutely no business experience. The little trade that existed, before the present generation, was mostly in the hands of the Spaniards and other foreigners. Nothing begets trust and confidence in your fellow-man like business experience. The larger that experience, the greater is the appreciation of the necessity of coöperation and of its value.

This failing has been a great setback to the political development of the country. It is the only menace that confronts the present political situation in Mexico. This

also is the result of lack of experience—experience in self-government. Mexico has not enjoyed more than eight years of real self-government in the whole life of the nation. But here also the indications are promising. The discipline and restraint shown by the victorious constitutional armies and their chiefs were most creditable and encouraging.

There are thousands of men in Mexico admirably equipped by study, intellect and culture to lead in public life and to administer the affairs of the nation, but few of them have had experience under circumstances that afforded them opportunity to acquire the *art* of government. Diaz' long and brilliant reign, while helpful to the economic development of the country, was an absolute despotism politically. When he retired there was not a man in the nation, outside the little group who did his bidding, who had had any political experience—at least not of a character to qualify for democratic government.

Some years have elapsed since then. They have been years of discipline; times that imposed self-restraint and coöperation. They have been times such as have developed politicians and statesmen in other lands. Why not in Mexico? I repeat, there is no lack of intellectual and moral capacity, nor of patriotism. All the men of Mexico need to take to heart is the lesson of "give and take," and acquiescence in the will of the majority. This is the first lesson of democracy. I believe they are learning that lesson.

There is a class of Mexicans at whose door the charge of lack of patriotism may truthfully be laid—the land-owning aristocracy. They divide their time between European resorts and the Jockey Club in Mexico City

during the bullfight season. They evince no more interest in the welfare of the Mexican people than the average foreign shareholder in a Mexican mine. It was this class who wrecked the Madero administration and who fomented and financed the revolution which ended in his assassination.

If patriotism means love of country, I believe it can truthfully be said that no people in the world have a more intense love of native land than the masses of the Mexican people. It may not be the broad, intelligent patriotism which compels unselfish political activity in time of peace, but this will come with education and freer opportunity for the exercise of the rights and duties of citizenship.

The masses of the Mexican people are illiterate but not ignorant. Popular education, except in respect to religion and politeness, was forbidden by a papal bull for two hundred years, and it is now opposed by the old régime; but it is one of the vital tenets of the constitutionalist movement. I expect to see great advance in that regard in the near future. The people are eager for education. The universal verdict of those in charge of the numerous American schools, located in different parts of the country, is that the Mexicans, including the Indians of the South, are apt students and capable of intellectual progress beyond age limits. Many of the great men in Mexican history were of Indian blood, pure or mixed. There appears to be no racial barrier either against education or progress.

The skill of the people in handicraft and industry is of the highest character. With rude tools and appliances they do fine work in all lines of production. As workmen and laborers they are diligent while at work

and need no watching, but they are philosophers. They are not disposed to put in more days than is necessary for their comfortable maintenance according to their standard of living. They are not lazy, nor are they thrifty. Nature does not demand thrift to maintain life in a climate like theirs. Higher civilization brings new wants, and added wants may add thrift to industry.

→ Their family life is most charming. During my nine months' stay I do not recall hearing a child cry, nor did I ever see an instance of anything that had the appearance of a family disturbance, and I mingled among the people a great deal. They are uniformly kind except in the use of their animals. Many sights in a Mexican city would shock the nerves of our professional "pre-venters." Their artistic sense is in high contrast with their general mode of living. A Mexican can poise a shabby sombrero and make it appear genteel, and a peon woman will drape her mantilla and arrange bits of color in a way to rouse the envy of an American milliner.

Another trait that makes life in Mexico charming, in spite of revolutions, is the universal hospitality of the nation. It is common to high and low alike. You find it in the palace; it greets you in the hut. "My house is yours," is the response to your salutation. It grips your heart and no one who has enjoyed it can forget its charm.

But these things to which I have alluded, the troubles which beset the unfortunate people, do not evoke the sympathy of the men who have lost dividends from mines, or wells, or plantations. I do not belittle these losses—they have been great and grievous. But there are greater interests in this world than dividends. The future weal or woe of fifteen million people seemed of

greater consequence to our President than the temporary losses of some of our citizens. Property losses can be compensated; but to retard civilization, whether by the recognition of a Huerta, or as is done in Europe at this hour, would have been a crime against two nations and against generations unborn. He proffered his good offices, and the good will of our nation, to the people of Mexico as one neighbor tenders his aid to his neighbor in distress. Was this the true American spirit, or would you have had our President act in the spirit that is now devastating European civilization?

It was charged against the President that he was led to act as he did by sentiment. Europe condemned his idealism as well as his diplomacy. They are reaping the fruit of *their* diplomacy, we of ours. Which do you prefer? Fortunately, in the case of Mexico, idealism and practical statesmanship followed parallel lines. The elimination of Huerta was demanded by the interests of the Mexican people. The elimination of the class in control of the Mexican government under him was demanded, not only by the interests of Mexico, but by the interests of the United States.

You have heard a great deal about the hostility of the Mexicans against everything American. I found no such hostility except among the class who supported Huerta. They hated us. What there is left of them hate us now. They do not hate us as individuals. They hate and dread the influence of our institutions. They say contact with the United States, and even with individual Americans, spoils the peons and makes rebels of them. Their eyes turned to Europe for trade, for finance and for all intercourse.

The people of the North know us. They like us as

well as any foreign people can like another. They are willing to be spoiled by contact with us—yes, they are willing to trade with us and to deal with us. They are trying to keep step with the march of our people politically. They are going to dominate the future of Mexico. They have the physical power. They have the brains. They have the energy. It may be misdirected on occasions, but time will right this.

End

We are interested in the progress of Mexico, not only for the cause of good neighborhood, but for economic reasons. Mexico is a great, rich and beautiful country. Its natural resources are not surpassed by any similar area on earth. In productions it is a natural trade complement to our own land. All permanent trade of any consequence is between countries of dissimilar climate and dissimilar productions. Mexico will be a producer of raw material for generations; Mexico raises virtually every product that we consume and that our climate will not produce. We manufacture every product that they require. Conditions that will give every Mexican a chance to till the soil which he loves so well, with schools for his children, will multiply his wants and increase his demand as a consumer tenfold. You see, the President's policy is not only ideal but eminently practical. It is a policy as imperialistic as the "big stick," but its aim is to conquer, not by force, but by the extension of good neighborhood, of civilization and the spirit of our institutions.

The foreign trade of Mexico in the year 1909-10 was approximately two hundred and thirty million dollars (gold), the exports representing one hundred and thirty millions and the imports about one hundred millions. Of the latter the United States furnished nearly sixty mil-

lions, against less than half that amount contributed in almost equal proportions by England, Germany and France. We furnish Mexico approximately sixty per cent of her imports.

The principal items of imports from the United States were manufactures of iron and steel, machinery, lumber, cotton goods, drugs and musical instruments. Of the exports the United States took approximately one hundred millions (gold), more than sixty millions of which consisted of gold and silver, and the ores of those metals. Of copper we received some seven millions. The next important items were fibers and rubber, which aggregated over fourteen millions.

These figures I obtained in Mexico. More than half of our exports entered Mexico by rail, which indicates the immense advantage which our proximity and land connections afford us.

In marked contrast to our commerce with Mexico, which is more than half of her foreign trade, is the limited extent to which our citizens have been permitted to participate in her government contracts for internal improvements. Obtaining them depended on government favor, and we have not been in the "favored nation" class in the past. We have virtually never obtained contracts of that character, although our contractors have materially underbid their European competitors. One English firm alone—that of Lord Cowdry—has drawn one hundred and thirty-five million pesos from the Mexican treasury for work of that character in the last few years.

With the passing of the old régime American enterprise will have a fair field. We need no favors. With peace and the return of normal conditions I look for a

vastly increased volume of trade. For one thing, we will have to assist them in the rehabilitation of their railroads, which alone will require an immense amount of materials. I predict that Mexico will take iron and steel products alone during the ensuing calendar year for more than one hundred million dollars.

The press is full of discussions relating to the extension of our foreign trade, particularly through Latin America. We are all glad to see the business interests aroused on this subject. It means a great deal for our commerce and industry. The time is certainly opportune. If we would succeed we must lay the foundation for our enterprise as wisely and as broadly as did Germany when she embarked upon the conquest of the world's trade. She planned for that campaign as thoroughly as she did for her military contest. She had all but succeeded when the war palsied her hand.

Let us examine for a moment the policy she pursued. She sent out trained observers to study trade conditions in the various markets. Samples of wares in use were obtained. The tastes and requirements of the different markets were studied. In a measure we have already done this. Many of our consuls have done intelligent work in this direction, and the new legislation is designed to extend that work. Germany established banks, or made adequate banking connections, in prospective trade centers. We have neglected this in the past. Private banks have been established here and there by Americans. With few exceptions they have been of little service to our trade, and by the scandalous failures of some, such as have occurred in Mexico, our business has been prejudiced and our good name besmirched. The new banking act makes ample provision for meeting this demand. It

is a pleasure to note that New York banks have already taken steps to establish branches in South America. Why should not Chicago do likewise in Mexico? There should be a strong branch bank in Tampico. Manufacturers in different lines should coöperate in establishing and maintaining our trade abroad. It is only by associated effort that great results are obtained.

In addition to these important steps there are others, which I have not seen discussed, but which in my judgment are imperatively necessary to insure permanent success. We must get into line with the commercial world in the matter of weights and measures. I asked an intelligent German merchant in Vera Cruz one day to explain to me how it had come about that Germany had absorbed so much of the trade that at one time went to England. He reached into a drawer, pulled out an invoice from England, and said, "Do you see those denominations of yards, feet and inches, gallons and pints; pounds, two kinds of ounces, grains and pennyweights, the whole summed up in pounds, shillings and pence? Well," he continued, "a Mexican, even if he can read a little English, needs an interpreter and an accountant to put this into the language of civilization. And," he added, "their business methods generally are just as antiquated as their methods of computation. That is why we get the business and then we make, not what suits us, but what the trade wants."

I wish the recital of this little incident could make the impression on you that it did on me. If it did, you would petition the President to make an order requiring government business to be transacted on the metric system,—after six months. Such an order would accomplish the change. We should be in accord, not only with

Latin America, but with all the rest of civilization, except England.

The American manufacturer and merchant must learn to understand that a foreign market is always a "buyers' market." They have been accustomed to dealing in a seller's market here at home so long that it is hard for them to learn that lesson. England used to have virtually a monopoly of modern industry. She still roosts on that memory—she still thinks the world has to come to her. That is why she is being distanced in the commercial race.

Another suggestion: as a nation we are not linguists. Our interests, our commerce and our activities have been domestic. It is only now that we are beginning to cast our eyes abroad as a nation. We have found the language of the land sufficient for our uses. In fact, it may almost be said that there is a prejudice against foreign tongues. The lack of young men with business training who are also linguists is a serious handicap in our quest for foreign trade, especially in Latin America.

Here again we may pattern after Germany. One of her first moves in preparation for her campaign was to take steps to fit her young men for the work. She established and maintained schools of commerce in which the commercial languages were taught. I am not aware of any such schools in this country. Generally speaking, languages are taught in our institutions for cultural purposes only. A reading knowledge is deemed sufficient. What is needed, if we aim to participate in the southern trade, is institutions to train young men for that work. Spanish should be taught and taught thoroughly—not the Castilian but the idiom spoken in Mexico and in South America. The literary language is the

same. As spoken, there is far more difference between American and European Spanish than there is between our spoken English and that of England.

I regard it as useless to attempt to work up trade in South America by sending out English-speaking travelling men with a grip and an itinerary that allows a day for a town. The commercial representative should be thoroughly equipped with knowledge of the language, the country, its people, its customs and its conventions. He must be afforded time enough in each locality to become acquainted with his prospective customers.

I will close with a plea for a warmer and a kindlier interest in these our neighbors. They bear us no ill will. They need our good will. We need theirs. We must be friends in peace and allies in trouble. The people of Mexico dwell in a rich and beautiful land. I feel that they are a people of great promise. They have suffered vicissitudes which we have escaped. I believe that they are emerging into the light of a new and a better day. They may still stumble politically. They may fall at times. But I would rather have them stumble and fall travelling our way than see them slide peacefully back into the bondage, the ignorance, the vice and the sloth of the sixteenth century.

